

The Trojan War: Part One

An epic poem is a long narrative that relates the deeds of heroes. Many of the stories of the Trojan War were compiled in an epic poem called the *Iliad* by the author Homer. They are among the oldest stories in literature.

While these tales are clearly mythological, historians believe there really was a Trojan war and that it took place about 1200 B.C. near the coast of Turkey. It might have been a trade war between different groups of Greek-speaking people for control of waters leading into the Black Sea.

The Apple of Discord

The struggle began when Eris [AIR-is], goddess of discord and quarreling, was not invited to the wedding of the hero Peleus [PEE-lee-uhs] and the sea-nymph Thetis [THEE-tis]. Eris threw among the revelers a golden apple inscribed "for the fairest." It rolled right up to where three goddesses were sitting: Hera [HEE-ruh], Athena [uh-THEEN-uh], and Aphrodite [af-roh-DIE-tee]. Of course, each goddess claimed it. Zeus [ZOOS] refused to be the judge of this Olympian beauty contest. He knew no matter how he decided he would never hear the end of it from the others. He told the goddesses to have Hermes [HER-meez] escort them to a mountain near Troy where Paris [PAIR-uhs], a son of King Priam [PRY-uhm], was watching the sheep. The king had sent him away because he had been warned that someday this boy would bring grief and ruin on his country. Paris was supposed to be a good judge of feminine beauty. The goddesses agreed, and Zeus warned them to abide by Paris's choice, however it went. Hermes escorted them to the high pastures of Troy where the shepherd-prince watched his flocks.

Each goddess promised Paris something if he would favor her. Hera offered him kingly power, Athena promised wisdom and glory in war, but Aphrodite, the Love Goddess, offered him the most beautiful woman in the world for his wife. Paris cared nothing for power and glory and, least of all, wisdom. He was young and shallow-minded. He awarded the golden apple to Aphrodite.

Hera = Juno
Athena = Minerva
Aphrodite = Venus
Zeus = Jupiter, Jove

Hermes = Mercury



Aphrodite promised Paris the most beautiful woman in the world if he would give her the golden apple.

Helen of Sparta

The most beautiful woman in the

world, Helen of Sparta, was the daughter of Zeus and Princess Leda [LEE-duh]. Of course, every prince in Greece wanted to marry her. Her mother's new husband, King Tyndareus [tin-DAR-ee-uhs] of Sparta, had to choose among the suitors. He was afraid that whoever he chose would have to fight for Helen against all the rest. To prevent this, he made them all take an oath that they would accept his decision and support the cause of Helen's husband if any wrong were committed against him because of this marriage. The suitors, each thinking he might be the one chosen, swore the oath and promised solemnly to punish any man who interfered with the marriage. Tyndareus then chose Menelaus [men-eh-LAY-uhs], brother of Agamemnon [ag-uh-MEM-non], King of Mycenae, and made Menelaus a king of Sparta, too.

Meanwhile, Aphrodite led Paris directly to Sparta. Menelaus and Helen received the Trojan prince graciously. They trusted him so completely that Menelaus went off on an expedition to Crete, leaving his wife to entertain their guest. The ties between host and guest among the Greeks were sacred, but Paris violated that trust, with the help of Aphrodite, who turned her arts on Helen and made her fall madly in love with the boy. When Menelaus got back he found his guest gone and his wife with him.

Here the oath and pact of the suitors went into effect. The brother of the injured husband, King Agamemnon of Mycenae, as commander in chief, was able to rally nearly all of the Greek kings to bring Helen back.



Helen of Sparta

Beyond the Myth

If you had to choose, would you rather have power, money, honor, glory, wisdom and knowledge, or beauty? (Be honest!)

Identify:

Homer	Eris	Leda	Peleus
Paris	Thetis	Priam	Helen
Agamemnon	Menelaus		

Define:

discord	revelers	suitors
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Locate on a map:

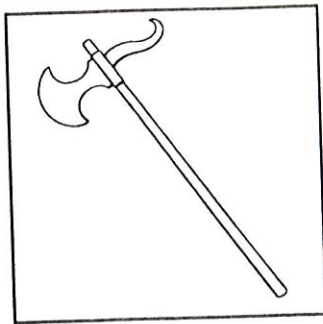
Turkey	Troy	Mycenae	Black Sea	Sparta
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Name _____ Date _____

The Trojan War: Part One

1. Some of the oldest stories in literature are found in a poem called the *Iliad* by _____.
2. Historians believe there really was a Trojan war; it might have been a trade war for economic control of the waters leading into the _____.
3. Eris was the goddess of _____ and _____.
4. The three rival goddesses for the beauty prize were _____, _____, and _____.
5. For a decision, Zeus sent them to the shepherd-prince, _____, son of King _____ of Troy.
6. Hera offered him _____, Athena offered _____, and Aphrodite offered _____ for his favor.
7. He gave the apple to _____.
8. The most beautiful woman in the world was _____ of Sparta.
9. Out of all the suitors, King Tyndareus chose _____ to be Helen's husband.
10. When Paris came as a guest, Helen fell in love with him because of the tricks of the goddess _____.
11. The ties between _____ and _____ were sacred to the Greeks.
12. The commander in chief of the Greek armies was _____, brother of Menelaus.

The Trojan War: Part Two



Valiant Warriors

Agamemnon gathered together hundreds of ships and set sail for Troy. The ships carried many men brave in battle and some wise in counsel.

Chief among them was Achilles [uh-KILL-eez], the greatest warrior and champion of all the Greeks.

The Greek kings and army were strong, but so were the defenders of Troy. King Priam [PRY-uhm] and Queen Hecuba [HEH-kue-buh] had many valiant sons ready both for attack and defense. But first and foremost there was Prince Hector [HEK-ter]. He was not only brave but noble—in every way a match for Achilles. In a sense, the whole outcome of the war hung on when, where, and how these two might meet. The Fates had revealed that each would die before Troy would be overthrown. Both heroes lived and fought under the shadow of certain death.

The gods, as they always do, took sides: Hera [HEE-ruh] and Athena [uh-THEEN-uh], who had lost out in the “beauty contest” were naturally for the Greeks. Poseidon [poh-SIE-don], Sea God, also favored the Greeks. Aphrodite [af-roh-DIE-tee], Artemis [AR-tem-is], and Ares [AIR-eez] were for the Trojans. Zeus [ZOOS] and Apollo [uh-PAW-loh], who as a healer and physician did not favor war, were neutral.

And so the Trojan War would shake both heaven and earth.

It went on for nine years, the fighting swaying back and forth—a stalemate. The Greeks could not take Troy, and the Trojans could not drive out the Greeks.

The Death of Patroclus and the Rousing of Achilles

One evening Achilles waited by his tent for his friend Patroclus [PAT-roh-kluhs] to come back from the day's fighting. He had loaned Patroclus his armor. But when he saw Antilochus [an-tee-LO-kuhs] running toward him, tears running down his face, he knew something was terribly wrong.

“Bad news, oh, bad news!” cried Antilochus. “Patroclus is slain; Hector has his armor.”

Wild grief seized Achilles. He was filled with rage and anger at the death of his dearest friend. So black and bitter was his



Greek Warrior

Hera = Juno
Athena = Minerva
Poseidon = Neptune
Aphrodite = Venus
Artemis = Diana
Ares = Mars
Zeus = Jupiter, Jove
Apollo = Apollo



Heroes of the Trojan War: Odysseus, Hector, and Achilles

mood that those around him feared for his life. Down in the sea caves his mother, Thetis [THEE-tis], heard his lament and came up to comfort him. He told her that if he could not avenge his comrade he was no longer worthy to live among men. "Remember," she said, "you are fated to die after Hector." "I care not," he replied. "I did not help my friend when he needed me. I will slay his destroyer. Then I can accept my own death without remorse."

Hephaestus = Vulcan



Hephaestus

Hephaestus [hee-FES-tuhs], at the request of Thetis, forged a new suit of mail and new weapons for Achilles. The shield was a marvel. The blacksmith god made it a work of art, with pictures and engravings of the earth and high heavens, the sea, sun, and moon, and the signs of the Zodiac and major constellations: the Pleiades and Orion and the Big Bear (Callisto). Also engraved on the shield were two beautiful cities, showing all the life of a Greek city of that time, with marriage feasts and dancing and law courts. It was a marvelous shield, indeed. When Thetis presented it to her son, Achilles was filled with great joy.

Beyond the Myth

1. Explain how the Trojan war "would shake both heaven and earth."
2. Using the description provided above, draw a picture of what you think Achilles' new shield looks like.

Identify:

the Pleiades
Priam
Patroclus
Hephaestus

Orion
Hecuba
Achilles

the Big Bear
Hector
Thetis

Define:

valiant

neutral

stalemate

suit of mail

Locate on a map:

Troy

Name _____ Date _____

The Trojan War: Part Two

1. The greatest of the Greek warriors was _____.
2. The bravest and most noble of the Trojan warriors was Prince _____, son of Priam and Hecuba.
3. Patroclus borrowed Achilles' armor, which was stolen by _____ after he killed Patroclus.
4. Achilles was told the terrible news of Patroclus's death by _____.
5. His mother, _____, the sea-nymph, came to comfort him.
6. When Achilles swore revenge, she reminded him that his own _____ would follow soon after that of Hector.
7. His mother got _____, the blacksmith god, to forge a new suit of armor.
8. The smith made him a beautiful shield with signs of the Zodiac and some of the important constellations, including the _____, _____, and the _____
_____ (Callisto).